

Borrowing Authority Act

have heard is double-tracking and doubletalk, and the doubletalk has caused uncertainty in connection with projects such as the one planned for Prince Rupert. The Prince Rupert port development has probably been deferred for a year or six months. I notice that an article which appeared in *The Globe and Mail* of May 29 said the site preparation planned to start this summer will not get under way at least until fall. Why? The deal has been made but, because of some little detail, the whole thing has been placed in jeopardy and deferred.

Consider the position of the government with respect to branch line retention or abandonment. It is interesting to note that in Winnipeg over the weekend the party opposite took the position that the Government of Canada should reaffirm the present guaranteed status accorded to prairie branch lines so that all branch lines now in the permanent system might remain in that system. Mr. Speaker, if participatory democracy means anything to the government, the Minister of Transport should not now be undertaking a review of a decision which was made by the former government, one which is now the law of the land.

They have cast confusion over the development of Roberts Bank. They cannot get their act together. What about the coal deal in northeastern British Columbia? There is a lot of huffing and puffing, but no action.

● (2020)

We do not know who in this House is responsible for grain transportation. The Minister of Transport says he is not responsible, but in the same breath he says he has to answer. The hon. member for Sarnia (Mr. Cullen) would do a much better job. We wish he were in the cabinet—

An hon. Member: So does he.

Mr. Mazankowski: —because I think he would go out and learn. The hon. member for Timmins-Chapleau (Mr. Chénier) does not have to talk because he knows that when my party was in office, and particularly through this former minister, we looked after all regions in Canada, including his own home town.

Mr. Corbin: It took you only three months to take away my passenger train service.

Mr. Mazankowski: That was an initiative which was started by the hon. member's government. Why does he not talk about the passenger services which we retained and which we expanded?

Mr. Corbin: And you did not finish our airport.

Mr. Mazankowski: If I had had another six months, I probably would have given the hon. member his airport, and I would not even have needed a twin to do that.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: One of the first things this government did when it assumed office was to announce a reduction in the

initial prices of wheat, and then in its press release it said that it was increasing the initial price of wheat. It was increased from the government's original initial price which it announced. We increased it, but hon. members opposite reduced it back to the old level. We increased the initial price of wheat from \$3.50 to \$4.25. They came along and reduced it. How can the people of western Canada have any faith in this government?

What about the two-price wheat system? We were in the process of establishing a minimum floor price of \$6 per bushel based on the cost of production and the realities of the marketplace. This government came along and established a minimum price of \$5 per bushel. Our proposal was to have been put into effect on February 1, 1980, and if that had been the case the farmers of western Canada would have been \$25 million richer. Under this administration they are \$25 million poorer, and the range of \$5 to \$7 is outdated before it has even been implemented because, right now, international markets indicate that the price of wheat is close to that figure of \$7, and it should go up.

Everyone in the grain trade would indicate that wheat prices should go up, and that is why it is important that this government get on with the job. We increased prices, and we were well under way in working out a satisfactory international grains agreement. I wish the minister in the other place, who was a strong advocate of that, would now be as ambitious in that regard as he was when he was in opposition.

What is really happening right now is that the western farmer is subsidizing the consumer. Farmers are selling their wheat domestically at less than the international price. That is not the only commodity with regard to which we have that anomaly. Oil is the other commodity which is sold at less than the world price. As a matter of fact it is sold at about 40 per cent of the world price. Why is it that two commodities which are very precious to western Canada are sold at prices which are far below the world price? In the case of oil the percentage is about 40 per cent, and in the case of wheat it is 20 per cent. Those are our major commodities. Last year the increase in the price of oil did not even reflect the inflationary factor. I believe the inflation rate was about 9.5 per cent, and the price of oil went up 8 per cent.

This Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources in this House and across the country compares Alberta to Kuwait. He accuses Albertans of being selfish and greedy and of being fabulously rich. He also says that Alberta is not sharing and is not prepared to share. In other words he is desperately trying to pit the rest of the country against the province of Alberta. I see that as being very despicable. As a matter of fact it is almost treasonous. I want to deal with that issue because, as I said before, there are two commodities which are produced in western Canada and which are sold domestically at far below world prices, and I challenge any hon. member opposite to tell me what other commodities are sold on that same basis in the country. Let them name them.

An hon. Member: Asbestos?